



Visiting Investigator Program Fact Sheet

NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center in South Mississippi offers the Visiting Investigator Program (VIP) to provide U.S. companies with low-cost opportunities to examine the use of geographic information technologies. This program reduces the cost of investigating remote sensing and technology applications by providing companies with access to NASA facilities, data and expertise.

In today's business arena, companies need timely, accurate and reliable information. Tasks such as geographic market studies, natural resource exploration, environmental monitoring and utility management are traditionally labor intensive and time consuming.

Businesses gain new perspectives on sources of global information through the use of geographic information technologies, such as NASA remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Remote sensing is using sensors that are either ground-based or mounted on aircraft and spacecraft to look at the Earth, while GIS is an electronic way to take an in-depth look at a specific area on Earth through a series of information layers. Combining data from imaging sensor systems with advanced GIS software reveals information previously unavailable, at any cost. Equipped with these space-age tools, U.S. industry is turning the challenges of global competition into opportunities for success.

The VIP offers a variety of remote sensing and GIS investigative opportunities. Companies participating in the VIP at Stennis Space Center include:

- Utility companies engaged in long-range planning and development of more efficient tools for facilities management;
- Environmental firms developing new ways to gather and process information for regulatory compliance;
- Natural resource exploration companies seeking better and more cost-effective ways to locate oil and mineral reserves; and
- Municipalities, urban planning consultants and civil engineering firms assessing growth patterns and the need for new roads, bridges and industrial sites.

Investigating these technologies is costly for U.S. companies with limited budgets and day-to-day operations to manage. The Visiting Investigator Program is a low-risk opportunity for investigating and evaluating a broad range of hardware, software and analysis techniques for business operations. The VIP reduces the cost of investigation by providing the use of NASA facilities, data

and expertise.

Since 1988, the VIP has worked with almost 40 companies. Because many companies cannot afford to send representatives to Stennis for up to nine months at a time, and because the VIP has grown significantly over the past few years, NASA decided to set up satellite centers across the country to make it easier and less costly for companies to participate. The VIP-Affiliate program includes the University of South Carolina, San Diego State University in California, Utah State University in Logan and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Stennis Space Center chooses Visiting Investigator Program participants by application. Application requires the submission of a brief proposal describing the nature and goals of the proposed research. All proposals must present a reasonable plan for possible commercial applications of proven results.

Once selected, Stennis Space Center provides the NASA know-how, the hardware and the software, satellite images, and use of aircraft sensors for remote sensing projects. The VIP functions under no exchange of funds agreement, which lasts from six to nine months. Participating in the Visiting Investigator Program can lead to many commercial development opportunities with NASA.

For more information about the Visiting Investigator Program, contact the Stennis Space Center Commercial Remote Sensing Program Office at (601) 688-2042, or access the home page at <http://crsphone.ssc.nasa.gov> (no quotes).
